



OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Navigating the Future

Management Plan Review



Cooperative Interpretation Program

The Olympic Peninsula received nearly 3 million visitors per year, all drawn by its natural beauty and opportunities for experiencing and learning about the Olympic Mountains, rain forests and ruggedly wild coast. Serving these visitors requires coordinated effort among public and tribal agencies who manage natural resources as well as a collaborative relationship with the region's tourism organizations and private-sector tourism enterprises.

Beginning in 1995, the sanctuary's first full year of operations, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary has partnered with other agencies and organizations to create new opportunities for visitors to experience, and learn from, hands-on, professionally guided interpretive programs. Each year, the sanctuary has funded seasonal positions that put more "boots on the beach" and enhance visitor programming at coastal visitor destinations.



An Olympic National Park Ranger/Naturalist leads a group at Kalaloch's Beach 4.

In addition to actual staffing, OCNMS has provided training to staff from Washington State Parks, Olympic National Forest, Olympic National Park and Makah tribal interpreters.



Visitors to Pacific Beach State Park listen to a Washington State Parks Interpretive Specialist.

This creates a trained cadre of naturalist guides that builds quality into all programming and assures that the visitor's experience, regardless of agency provider, is consistent in factual information and professional delivery.

Partners: The Key to Success

From 1995 to 2003, the sanctuary funded summer positions in Olympic National Park. These seasonal rangers were located at Mora and Kalaloch. The program was discontinued due to a lack of funding resources.

From 1996 to 1999, the sanctuary funded one seasonal position with Washington State Parks. That naturalist worked at Ocean City, Griffiths Priddy and Pacific Beach state parks.

Beginning in 2000, the sanctuary has funded positions through the Makah Cultural and Research Center. Originally, funding supported a seasonal full-time position at Cape Flattery (estimated 40,000 visitors per year) and part time positions at the Makah Museum, where museum staff interpreted Makah culture and marine resources. Funding limitations have reduced the program to part-time seasonal interpretation at Cape Flattery only.

In addition to public partners, the sanctuary has been actively committed to tourism agency and private-sector efforts to serve visitors. Sanctuary staff have periodically participated in tourism workshops and summits, consulted with business and civic groups on ecotourism and regional economic development strategies. As a resource steward, the sanctuary projects messages of visitor uses that are compatible with resource protection. Within this framework, the sanctuary has encouraged whale-watching, birdwatching, kayaking, hiking as well as businesses that offer guided opportunities in these areas.



Polly McCarty, Makah tribal member and summer interpreter for the Makah Museum, at Cape Flattery, with new friends.

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